

UDC 81-22

POLYSEMY OF ENGLISH TERMS**S. M. Bobrovnyk***Kyiv, National Technical University of Ukraine "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"*

cindsv@mail.ru

The article deals with the polysemy of English technical terminology. The ways of formation of new meanings of technical terms have been found out. General characteristics of terms and their types are given. The term "polysemy" has been determined. The main features of technical terms have been defined. Examples of ambiguity of English terms have been given. In modern world where technology takes the primary place understanding of technical terms has a great importance. Polysemantic terms of the modern English language stimulate a great interest, because the structure of polysemantic terms which is spread on many branches of science and industry must be understood and translated correctly. Polysemy has been considered as a result of semantic development of general and technical meanings. Different meanings of a polysemantic word can come together due to the proximity of notions which they express. Understanding of technical notions is a powerful source of technical terminology development. Most words in English are ambiguous with different interpretations; words can have different meaning in different contexts, especially concerning technical terms. Material of the research is technical terms obtained in the result of typical selection of sources, namely, technical instructions and texts of technical subjects. Knowledge of polisemantic terms will help cope with the task of translation.

Key words: polysemy, term, meaning, define, ambiguity, unambiguity.

Introduction. The problem of terms' polysemy was the subject of great attention of many linguists such as K.Y. Averbukh, S.N. Vinogradov, A.A. Reformatorskiy and others. The study of development of technical terms and the study of the problems of translation are of great interest for linguists. In modern terminology a great attention is paid to the questions of terms' functioning in speech. Most words in English are ambiguous with different interpretations; words can have different meanings in different contexts, especially concerning technical terms. Complex analysis of terms' system functioning in the special context is very important.

The topicality of the study of the ways and problems of terms translation is stipulated by wide cooperation of different countries and increasing communication in the field of technology. The necessary condition of interlanguage communication is equivalence of terms which construct information in the technical text.

The subject of the research is polysemantic terms of the modern English language, the structure of which is spread on many branches of science and industry. Studying polysemy of English terms will help in understanding technical texts.

The aim of the research is to identify the special layer of lexis of the modern English language, that is inter-branch polysemantic words and single out their linguistic phenomena.

Material of the research is technical terms obtained in the result of typical selection of sources, namely, technical instructions and texts of technical subjects. In the process of study the method of definitional analysis was used which allowed to set up notion-stipulated bonds between English and Russian terms. Also the method of contextual analysis was used, as the definition doesn't always allow getting full image of the term's meaning. In this case we need analysis of narrow or broad context. Method of comparison and opposition of notions is used in determination of terms, and also the method of complete selection.

Polysemy. Polysemy from Greek: πολυ-, poly-, "many" and σημα, sēma, "sign") is the capacity for a sign (such as a word, phrase, or symbol) to have multiple meanings (that is, multiple semes or sememes and thus multiple senses), usually related by contiguity of meaning within a semantic field. It is thus usually regarded as distinct from homonymy, in which the multiple meanings of a word may be unconnected or unrelated [6].

Polysemy is a concept within disciplines such as media studies. The analysis of polysemy, synonymy is vital in the information-science senses of those terms. It has applications in engineering, because they rely on word-sense disambiguation. For example, the word bank has the following meanings 1) financial institution; 2) the building where a financial institution offers services; 3) a synonym for the expression "rely upon", for instance "*I'm your friend, you can bank on me.*". However, *a river bank* has a completely different meaning. *Bank*, the noun, refers to the steep side of a river, stream, lake, or canal, e.g., *We climbed the river bank safely.* And *bank*, the noun, also means a row of similar things, e.g., "*There was a bank of switches on the wall.*". The word "*book*" means a bound collection of pages; a text reproduced and distributed; and also this

word has another meaning, i.e. making an action or event a matter of record, e.g. *“Unable to book a hotel room, a man sneaked into a nearby private residence where police arrested him and later booked him for unlawful entry”*. The word *“newspaper”* – a printed publication (usually issued daily or weekly) consisting of folded unstapled sheets and containing news, articles, advertisements, and correspondence, which is translated as “газета”, and also it can mean a company that publishes written news. The different meanings can be combined in a single sentence, e.g. *“John used to work for the newspaper that you are reading”* [6].

The word *“wood”* means a piece of a tree and also a geographical area with many trees. Word combination with *“wood”* can be translated as follows; *“wood of commerce”* – поделочная древесина; *“acid wood”* – древесина химической обработки. The word *“crane”* has several meanings, e.g. a bird – журавль, цапля; a type of construction equipment – подъёмный кран. There are set expression with the word *“crane”*, e.g. *“to strain out one's neck”* – вытягивать шею (для того, чтобы лучше увидеть что-л.). In technical context there are word-combinations with *“crane”*, e.g. *“arm crane”* – консольный кран; *“block crane”* – посадочный кран; *“cable crane”* – кабельный кран; *“camera crane”* – операторский кран [2].

Polysemy is inherent in the very nature of words and concepts as every object and every notion has many features and a concept reflected in a word always contains a generalisation of several traits of the object. A word which has more than one meaning is called polysemantic. Different meanings of a polysemantic word may come together due to the proximity of notions which they express e.g. the word *“blanket”* has the following meanings: *“a woollen covering used on beds, a covering for keeping a horse warm, a covering of any kind”* (a blanket of snow), covering all or most cases used attributively, e.g. we can say *“a blanket insurance policy”*.

The word *“face”* has the primary meaning which denotes *“the front part of the human head”* and also it has meanings connected with the front position of objects, e.g.: *“the front part of a watch, the front part of a building, the front part of a playing card”*. Connected with the word *“face”* itself the meanings: expression of the face, outward appearance are formed. In cases of concatenation secondary meanings of a word develop like a chain. *“Face”* – передняя поверхность, *“face of brick”* – лицевая грань кирпича, *“face of building”* – фасад здания, *“face of plane”* – нижняя сторона рубанка, *“acting face”* – рабочая поверхность, *“adjacent face”* – смежная грань [2].

Polysemy implies that a word may contain its previous meaning or meanings and at the same time acquire one or several new meanings. Then the problem of interrelation and interdependence of individual meanings of a polysemantic word can be formulated as if the word always keeps all its implications or some of them appear earlier than the others.

Semantic changes result as a rule in a new meaning being added to the ones already existing in the semantic structure of the word. Some of the old meanings can become outdated or even disappear, but a great number of English words tend to increase in a number of meanings. This refers to technical term as well.

The phenomenon of polysemy exists not in the speech but in the language. The problem of polysemy is mainly the problem of interrelation and interdependence of various meanings of the same word. It is impossible to speak about the role of the meaning without understanding the word. The context is always observed. Great attention should be paid to the sentence; it must be translated, for example from English into Ukrainian or Russian. It is preferable to be familiar with the subject that is translated, i.e. the sphere of engineering. During the whole study a student is taught by teachers to understand the sentence and then to translate it with the help of the context. We can choose the necessary meaning intuitively. But the observing the context types explains a lot, for example the choice of the necessary implication. Sometimes we don't know all the meanings of the words which must be translated, and we only guess by context. The context is that stretch of speech necessary to find out individual meanings. Most English words are polysemantic. It should be noted that the range of the represented resources of a language largely depends on the scope to which polysemy has developed in the language.

Despite the recognition of polysemy development of terminological vocabulary by linguists, there are still many unexplored issues related to the development of terminological ambiguity. Practical meaning is in the results of the research that can be used in training of students of technical universities.

In line with the general trend of the language polysemous terms borrowed at first only in one of its meanings. In the process of borrowing can change their semantics. Assimilated, they are able

to develop values, thus becoming, interbranch polysemantic words-terms. Realisation of technical names is a powerful source of technical terminology development.

Terms. According to A.A. Reformatorsky terms (from Latin “border”, “limit”) are special words which are defined by their special meaning, the words which aim to be unambiguous, well-defined as an accurate expression of the meaning and name of the things. It is necessary in technique, diplomacy etc. Terms exist not only in the language, but in the structure of definite terminology. If in a common language they can be polysemantic, in terminology they acquire unambiguity [5, p. 62].

Technical terms are units of any concrete natural or artificial language, words or word-combinations, abbreviation, symbols, combination of words or letters or figures possessing special terminological meaning appeared as a result of spontaneous existing or special conscious collective agreement, which can be expressed in a word form reflecting the main signs of the existing notion on the definite level of science and technology development. A term is a word which correlates with a specific unit of the corresponding logical-conceptual system in terms of content.

So what is the linguistic nature of terms? Firstly, a term is an inherent organic part of lexical system of the language. Secondly, terms differ from other categories of words by their wide informative intensity. Technical terms give the most accurate, concentrated definition of scientific or technical concepts. The main demand to terms is its unambiguity. There are two categories of terms: 1) general scientific and general technical terms and 2) special (nomenclature) terms. General scientific terms express general notions of science and technology. They exist in the structure of definite terminology. According to A.A. Reformatorsky, terminology is the system of concepts of definite science embodied in the appropriate verbal expression. The specifics of the terms as a special category of lexical words is that they are in the process of production and research activities and, therefore, function only with people who have the relevant scientific and industrial realities, that is macrocontext. Therefore, in contrast to usual words, the uniqueness of which is provided in the speech communication situation or linguistic context, the uniqueness of the term is regulated by linguistic or extralinguistic macrocontext or linguistic microcontext. A term does not require a context as a common word, so it refers to specific terminology that supersedes the context; it can be used separately, for example, in texts of registers or orders in technique, and that should be unambiguous in the limits of certain terminology. Within the scope of lexical system of the language, terms demonstrate the same properties as the other words, i.e. polysemy is typical for them. For example, the term “valve” in machinebuilding means – “клапан”, but in radio – “электронная лампа”, in hydraulics – “затвор”; term “power” in physics – “мощность”, “энергия”, in mathematics – “степень”, in optics – “сила увеличения линзы”.

Terms-phrases are created by adding a term that refers to a generic term, specifying the signs in order to obtain specific concepts directly related to the source. Such terms are actually determinations leading this concept under the more general and at the same time indicating its specific feature. Thus, peculiar terminological units appear covering numerous varieties referred to the phenomenon of the defined notion. For example: term “valve” means “клапан; вентиль; золотник; затвор”; in botany – “створка”, in autonomy – “клапан сердца”; in engineering “deceleration valve – тормозной клапан; “deceleration flow control valve” – регулятор, обеспечивающий плавное замедление движения потока; “deck drain valve” – мор. клапан точной системы; “delivery valve” – нагнетательный клапан; “depress valve” – клапан сброса давления; “diaphragm valve” – мембранный клапан; мембранный вентиль; “diaphragm seating action valve” – гидро- или пневмоаппарат с мембранным клапаном; “differential pressure control valve” – клапан разности давления; “to valve off a line” – перекрывать трубопровод задвижкой [2].

Terms are complex words; they penetrate into English scientific literature, as the meaning of the complex word is always accurately specialized than the meaning of the proper word-combination. For example, the word “fighter” – воин, воитель, in aviation this terms means “истребитель”; “allweather fighter – всепогодный истребитель, i.e. the type of an aircraft which is designed for both day and night for any weather.

The first thing is to determine which lexical-semantic category includes the components of a compound word, i.e what they mean: objects, actions, properties. Terms consisting of complex words are both components that mean subjects (i.e. machines, mechanisms, devices, etc); they are translated differently depending on their coorelation given by the objects.

Multicomponent complex words pose a special challenge for translation. First of all it is necessary to disclose the value of the main component. A major role in this, of course, plays the context. Then, as a part of a multi-component compound word, the term should find internal terms, if any, with the associated words. The following examples illustrate the sequence of multi-translation of terms. For example, “*access*” – *досун*, it is a common meaning, but in some context it can be translated as – “*люк*”; “*adjustment access*” – *люк для регулювання*. The first meaning of the word “*cable*” – *канат, трос*”; and for instance, the word-combination “*control-surface cable*” is translated as “*трос руля управління*”. The meaning of the whole term “*control-surface cable adjustment*” is *люк для регулювання тросами руля управління*.

Another example, the word “*measurement*” has common meaning – *измерение*; “*speed measurement*” – *измерение скорости*, *radio wave* – *радиоволна*. The meaning of the whole term “*radio wave speed measurement*” is *измерение скорости радиоволны*.

Conclusion. To conclude we can say that polysemy is a historical change in the semantic structure of the word resulting in new meanings being added to the ones already existing and in the rearrangement of these meanings in its semantic structure. As the semantic structure is never static, the relationship between the diachronic and synchronic evaluation of individual meanings of the same word may be different in different periods of historical development of the language. Translators should take into consideration all variety of terms’ polysemy to translate technical texts correctly. Undoubtedly, engineers of specific branch knowing the language can translate better technical texts because they know the subject of translation that is their major and they understand the technological process so they can interpret it in a proper way. Nevertheless, the knowledge of polisemantic terms will help cope with the task of translation.

REFERENCES

1. Авербух К.Я. Общая теория термина / К.Я. Авербух. – М., 2005. – 42 с.
2. Баринов С.М. Большой Англо-русский политехнический словарь / С.М. Баринов. – М., 1991. – 718 с.
3. Виноградов С.Н. Нечеткость терминологии и ее причины (на материале терминологии) словообразования) / С.Н. Виноградов. // Вопросы терминологии. Межвузовский сборник / под ред. В.Н. Немченко. – Н.Новгород: Изд-во ННГУ, 1993. – С. 35-42.
4. Виноградов С.Н. Проявление неоднозначности терминов при построении информационно-поисковых систем / С.Н. Виноградов // Термин и слово. Межвузовский сборник. – Горький: Изд-во ГГУ им.Н.И. Лобачевского, 1982. – С.40-45.
5. Реформаторский А.А. Введение в языковедение / А.А. Реформаторский. – М., 1996. – 275 с.
6. Polysemy and homonymy [Electronic Resource]. – Mode of access: <http://www.afv.gr/index.php>

REFERENCES

1. Averbuh, K.Y. (2005). General theory of terms. Moscow, Russia: [in Russian].
2. Barinov, S.M. (1991). Big English-Russian Polytechnic Dictionary. Moscow, Russia: [in Russian].
3. Vinogradov, S.N. (1993). Vagueness of terminology and its causes (based on the material of word formation terminology. Voprosy terminolohyy. Mezhvuzovskyy sbornyk, 35-42 [in Russian].
4. Vinogradov, S.N. (1982). Manifestation of ambiguity of terms in construction of information search systems. Termin i slovo. Mezhvuzovskyy sbornyk, 40-45 [in Russian].
5. Reformatorskiy, A.A. (1996). Introduction to Linguistics. Moscow, Russia [in Russian].
6. Polysemy and homonymy. Retrieved from: <http://www.afv.gr/index.php>

С. М. Бобровник. Полісемія англійських термінів. У статті розглядається багатозначність англійської технічної термінології. Були виявлені шляхи формування нових смислів технічних термінів. Наведена загальна характеристика термінів та їх типів. Був визначений термін – «багатозначність». Визначені основні особливості технічних термінів. Розуміння технічних назв є потужним джерелом розвитку технічної термінології. Більшість слів в англійській мові є неоднозначними з різними інтерпретаціями; слова можуть означати різні речі в різних контекстах, особливо щодо технічних термінів. Матеріал дослідження технічних термінів, отримані в результаті типового вибору джерел, а саме, технічних інструкцій і текстів технічних дисциплін. Знання багатозначності технічних термінів допоможуть впоратися із завданням перекладу.

Ключові слова: багатозначність, термін, означати, визначати, неоднозначність, однозначність.

С. М. Бобровник. Полисемия английских терминов. В статье рассматривается многозначность английской технической терминологии. Были обнаружены пути формирования новых значений технических терминов. Дана общая характеристика терминов и их типы. Был определен термин «многозначность» и основные особенности технических терминов. Понимание технических названий является мощным источником развития технической терминологии. Большинство слов в английском языке являются неоднозначными с различными интерпретациями; слова могут означать разные вещи в разных контекстах, особенно, что касается технических терминов. Материал исследования технические термины, полученные в результате типичного выбора источников, а именно, технических инструкций и текстов технических дисциплин. Знание полисемии терминов поможет справиться с задачей перевода.

Ключевые слова: многозначность, термин, означать, определять, неоднозначность, однозначность.